

aboutTOWN

Newsletter of the Town of Blacksburg • www.blacksburg.gov • april2002june



**Comprehensive
Plan is
Available
Online**

Planning From Your Home

Fire up your computer, go on-line to www.blacksburg.gov/comp_plan and check out the latest innovation in Blacksburg planning. Blacksburg 2046, the Town's newest Comprehensive Plan, is designed for access through the Internet. Citizens can browse the plan by subject, geography, or user type and may access a Master Table of



Remember!
Daylight Savings
Time begins April 7

in this issue

Town Manager Greetings...	2
BT Olympic Drivers	3
Human Relations Convocation...	3
Matching Grant Program	4
A Question of Housing	4
Town Greenway Project	5
Spring Cleanup	6
Broomin' and Bloomin'	6



Contents, hot link directly into any chapter, or search for the topic of their interest throughout the plan. One of the most unique characteristics of this plan is that it interacts seamlessly with the Town's dynamic GIS system, offering easy navigation, access, and zooming capabilities with full color maps and photographs.

The plan can be navigated in multiple ways. The top left

portion of the home page offers a simple word search function that scans the plan from front to back similar to Microsoft Word's "Find Next" function. At the top right of the home page there is a pull-down menu "Choose a Section of the Plan" for direct access to any portion of the plan. Users can learn to navigate the town's web GIS by interacting with the town map that is

divided into nine sections (8 within Town). Finally, all chapters are neatly listed at the bottom of the home page, including the plan's appendices.

To assist users with this new innovation in Comprehensive Planning, WTOB Channel 2 will be producing a tutorial video that will demonstrate major elements of the site

and proper navigation. Look for this program on Channel 2 or check the schedule on the town's website at www.blacksburg.gov/calendar.php. Scroll to the bottom of the page for the WTOB Programming Schedule. For questions or comments call 961-1126 or e-mail planningandengineering@blacksburg.gov

MISSION OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

The government of the Town of Blacksburg exists to promote and sustain a superior quality of life in Blacksburg. In partnership with the community, we pledge to deliver cost-effective services in a personal, responsive and innovative manner.

TOWN COUNCIL (clerk@blacksburg.gov)

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A Letter from the Town Manager



Dear Blacksburg Citizens,

Several complex issues will be addressed by Town Council and staff this Spring. Facing these challenges and working to find solutions will make Blacksburg a much better community.

Town Council has directed staff to research the issue of affordable housing. Ensuring that affordable housing is available within Blacksburg remains a high priority of Town Council. You can read more about this topic in this publication.

The State budget crisis has a tremendous impact on local government budgets. As we realize reductions in several state revenue sources, we must continue to find alternative ways to maintain current service levels for our citizens while not raising tax rates in the fiscal year 2002-2003 budget.

The next phase of our eGovernment initiative is to provide online payment capability for most town services and fees. By this summer, we plan to have available online utility payments through our town website. This electronic technological advancement requires Town staff to utilize tremendous expertise and coordination.

Although the tasks before us are not easy, a talented and resourceful town staff and Council are dedicated to successful resolution of these issues. This positive approach is a trademark of Blacksburg Town Government.

Sincere Regards,

Gary A. Huff
Town Manager

TOWN ELECTIONS MAY 7, 2002

PLEASE VOTE !

Blacksburg has two Polling Places for local elections in May:

- **Blacksburg Municipal Building - 300 South Main Street**
- **Blacksburg Community Center - 725 Patrick Henry Drive**

Please check your Voter Registration Card under "Town Polling Place" to determine the correct voting location. Citizens who have questions regarding where to vote should call the Montgomery County Registrar's Office – 382-5741.

Buckle Up Now

The Blacksburg Police Department is participating in a new program to encourage motorists to wear their safety belts. The program, Buckle Up Now, is a focused high visibility enforcement effort designed to help save lives and prevent or reduce serious injuries in motor vehicle crashes.

Coordinated by Lt. W.D. Parks, the program has three basic components. The first and second will be a survey of current safety belt usage by Town residents followed by a concentrated enforcement effort. The third phase is educational, where officers will continue to assist parents

with the installation of child safety seats.

Presently, Montgomery County has a 68% safety belt usage. By the end of this calendar year, we hope to significantly increase voluntary safety belt use. For more information about this program, contact Lt. Parks at 961-1150. For safety seat information or to schedule an appointment to have a safety seat installed, contact Police Services, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The police department also has a supply of safety seats available for families in need at no cost.

aboutsafety 
keeping you and your family safe

IDENTIFYING LOCATION IN 911 SITUATIONS IS CRITICAL

In the event of a life-threatening emergency or in-progress crime, it's extremely important that your police, fire and rescue personnel be able to locate you as quickly as possible. Please mark the front of your homes with reflective numbers that are at least 3 1/2 inches in height. If you own or operate a business, remember to paint or stencil your business name on the back door as well. For questions call the Blacksburg Police Department at 961-1150.

Olympic Branded Transit Drivers



Letters of acceptance were received, airline tickets in hand, bags packed and six of Blacksburg Transit's finest were on their way to Salt Lake City, Utah to serve as the elite transit service personnel for the 2002 Winter Olympics.

The Olympic application process began in July 2000, and by September 2001, Jason Easter, Christopher Stuard, Valerie Daniels, Paul Daniels, Michael Grega and Roger Tomschin were invited to the Olympics. Of the 750 Transit team members 15 were from the State of Virginia, and six were from Blacksburg Transit.

Departing Blacksburg on February 3rd and returning February 26th, these operators spent their time shuttling millions of visitors in and around the Salt Lake City area to and from the various Olympic venues.

Congratulations to the BT crew for being selected, and for representing the Town of Blacksburg and surrounding communities in Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.



Back Row: Jason Easter, Christopher Stuard, Valerie Daniels, Paul Daniels; **Front Row:** Michael Grega and Roger Tomschin

Convocation Planned by the Human Relations Council

The Human Relations Council of Montgomery County hopes to get 165 people around a table for a day of dialogue, discovery, and community. The goal is to learn how to listen and converse inclusively while identifying the most pressing human relations issues in the County.

One thousand invitations were mailed to a wide range of people from members to community leaders in business and industry, non-profits and religious establishments.

The date is Saturday, April 13th. Breakfast and lunch will be served. Come join the group, as facilitators Paula Wilder and Brenda Brand lead this dynamic event

Make your reservation on line at <http://civic.bev.net/hrc> today!

Apply Now for Blacksburg's Neighborhood Matching Grant Program

On January 21st Town Council approved the use of Town funds for nine Neighborhood Matching Grant projects. These projects ranged from street lighting enhancements along Craig Drive to a picnic shelter in Westover Park. The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program allows the Town to contribute up to a \$1,000 to a single project neighborhood and requires residents to raise at least half of the grant project amount.

Grant projects should benefit the neighborhood or community as a whole and be a capital improvement. More than \$12,000 in Town matching funds is available for neighborhoods to take advantage of this year. If you are interested in this grant program call Dan McKinney at 961-1184 for additional information. The next deadline for grant applications is May 1, 2002, so act now!

2001 - 2002 Blacksburg Neighborhood Matching Grant Projects

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Awarded	Total Project Cost
Glade – Westover Hethwood	Picnic shelter in Westover Park	\$1,000	\$2,000
	Landscaping along Prices Fork/ Heather Drive entrance	\$1,000	\$2,022
Farmview – Ramble Miller Southside	Landscaping improvements	\$1,000	\$2,500
	Two entrance signs with landscaping	\$1,000	\$2,000
Northside Park	Street Lighting Improvements	\$1,000	\$2,100
Woodbine – Wyatt Farms Hethwood	Trail Enhancements	\$800	\$1,600
	Signage Improvements	\$613	\$1,225
Woodbine – Wyatt Farm	Landscaping along North Main Street	\$150	\$300
Northside Park	Screening and buffering enhancements	\$1,000	\$10,000
		\$7,563	\$23,747

A Question of Housing

The Blacksburg housing market and more specifically affordable housing has become an important topic of conversation over the past several months. One of the main questions is; what is the future of housing for young families, empty nesters, and moderate to low-income individuals?

In Winter 2002 Town Council and Planning Commission directed staff to conduct an analysis of the state of housing in Blacksburg. The analysis will answer questions such as the following:

- *What is affordable housing?*
- *Presently where is the affordable housing in Town?*
- *Is the present amount of affordable housing sufficient in Blacksburg?*
- *What is the condition of the housing?*
- *What are the price ranges of newly built houses? Are any affordable?*
- *How can the Town improve it's housing stock?*
- *What options does the Town have to properly influence the housing market?*

So, what appears to be happening with Blacksburg housing? In 2000, the average sale price for a Blacksburg single-family house was over

\$186,000, and newly constructed single-family homes averaged \$222,000. With the average family in Blacksburg earning close to \$50,000 a year many of these homes are unattainable. The majority of homes that are in the affordable price range are duplexes and townhouses. Many of these dwellings are designed specifically for and marketed directly to the student population. Families competing for housing with students have an uphill battle with rents averaging close to \$700 per month and many new apartments or townhouses rent over \$1,200 per month.

What do these statistics mean? One fact is constant, since the State does not permit towns to ban growth; the Town's population is projected to grow at a rate of 1.5% a year. If not enough affordable housing is available, many potential homeowners could be diverted outside the Town. In addition, if the market demands large expensive houses, some dwellings that are currently affordable could be replaced with new construction.

What consequences are there if we do nothing? Not addressing the hous-

ing issues could have several negative impacts. One is the promotion of sprawl outside the Town limits: increasing traffic problems, marring scenic views, and increasing pressure on environmental sensitive areas. Another possible impact is an increased number of student rental properties in traditionally single-family neighborhoods. Finally, by not addressing housing concerns now the Town could lose many young families, empty nesters, and moderate to low income families who are an integral component of our population and contribute substantially to Blacksburg's character.

The new housing study will look beyond the Town's borders and determine how Blacksburg housing impacts Montgomery County and vice versa. It is a comprehensive goal to provide quality housing throughout Town. This study will examine whether the Town is meeting this goal and what changes might need to be considered.

For more information, contact Dan McKinney Comprehensive Planner, at 961-1184 or dmckinney@blacksburg.gov.

SPRING PARKS AND RECREATION REGISTRATION APPROACHES

Community Water Safety for Scouts

Blacksburg Aquatic Center offers Community Water Safety for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Sign up today and reserve your Community Water Safety Day to earn badges. Troop/Scout leaders should call the Blacksburg Aquatic Center at 961-1852 and reserve the pool from 12 noon - 2:00 p.m. on Sundays during the months of April and May 2002. (April 7, April 21, April 28 and May 19) The Fee is \$25 for Blacksburg Residents and \$35 for Non-residents. For more information please call 961-1852

Summer Camps 2002 Registration

Blacksburg Parks and Recreation offers a wide variety of camps for all ages such as; playgrounds for tots and elementary age, art, outdoor adventure, sports and more. Registration will begin for our Summer Camps beginning Tuesday, May 21, 2002, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at "The REC" (Community Center gym). Please bring proof of residency. Registration will continue on May 22, 2002,

from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Recreation Offices (615 Patrick Henry Drive.) For more information please call 961-1135.

New River Valley Senior Olympic-Games

The New River Valley Senior Olympic-Games is a not-for-profit organization, dedicated to promoting greater levels of physical, social, intellectual and creative achievement through friendly competition and participation for all seniors, regardless of age or ability. All seniors 50 and older are eligible to participate. This year's events start on Friday, April 26 and run through Wednesday, May 1. Registration forms must be turned in by **Friday, April 5**. For more information contact Joy Herbert at the Blacksburg Senior Center 961-1134 or email jherbert@blacksburg.gov.

Check out our program brochure online at www.blacksburg.gov/recreation.

Making connections on Town Greenway Project

The Town has taken its first vital steps to creating a Central Greenway Corridor that will connect downtown Blacksburg, the High School and Municipal Park with the Virginia Tech campus and other areas of Town. This was accomplished by the Town's recent purchase of the Wong Property, a 9.2-acre parcel of land and residing bungalow on Wilson Avenue. Being able to more safely and efficiently move students and citizens from point A to point B by means of alternative transportation has always been a priority in Blacksburg. One of the Town's longtime initiatives identified in the Comprehensive Plan is to develop an extensive greenway system for the community. The Central Blacksburg Greenway is the off road trail connection that will most directly accomplish this objective.

Captain Tei-Pei Wong approached the Town a few years back with the concept of the Town purchasing the land for use as a recreational space. Town Manager, Gary Huff suggested that Captain Wong and his family donate the

property. Later, an agreement was made that the Wong family would donate half of the property's assessed value. This proposed compromise turned out to be the solution for both parties. The Wong family would donate a portion of the property to be used for recreational purposes, and the Town would purchase the rest through T-21 grants and traditional funding.

Prior to purchasing the land, the Town hired Hill Studio Architects to propose potential uses for the property. Out of this agreement, three passive use concepts were born: 1) Lake Park; 2) Arts Park; and 3) Town Green. Common themes in each proposal were water retention / storm water control, a greenway trail, passive use of the site with no athletic fields, and civic use of the bungalow house currently sitting on the property. The conceptual plans also provided several of the following options: sculpture

and environment art placed along a series of weirs, cluster housing development on the corners of the park, dry vs. wet retention ponds, and house use as a teen, art, or community center. The conceptual plans are not mutually exclusive and aspects of each could be incorporated into the final plan.

Two public input forums have been held allowing citizens an opportunity to offer feedback. To view these concepts visit the Town's website at http://www.blacksburg.gov/enews/press_release/forum.php.

Blacksburg's Gem, A Historic 1914 Bungalow nestled among the trees on the Wong Property



Spring Cleanup 2002

Spring Cleanup is going on in April for the Northwest and Southwest Quadrants. Items must be placed **curbside no later than 7:30 a.m.** on the Monday of the week listed below for your quadrant. **This service is for Town residential refuse and recycling customers only.** No collection is conducted on private streets or in parking lots. Materials placed near mailboxes, water meters, fire hydrants, posts, or other obstacles will not be collected due to the potential damage to these obstacles by Town equipment.

Northwest Quadrant April 8

Southwest Quadrant April 15

- Items must be separated into distinct piles of **brush**, **tires** (without rims), **appliances** (with any airtight doors removed), and other **debris**. Household or yard chemicals, tree stumps, paint, and other hazardous waste will not be collected. Please note that this program is not intended to pick up major construction and/or demolition debris
- If you have any questions, contact the Parks and Landscape Division of Public Works at 961-1806.

2002 Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration

The Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration for 2002 will take place Saturday April 27, 2001 from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. at Nellie's Cave Park. The event will include tree planting, mulching, and general park cleanup. The Town of Blacksburg would like to extend a special invitation to all residents of the Grissom/Highland neighborhood as we beautify a local park. All interested citizens,



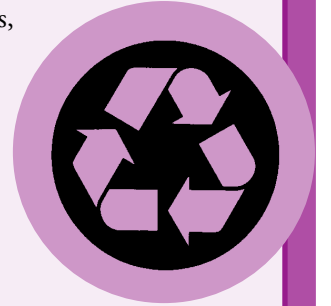
groups, and organizations are invited to attend the 2002 Earth Day and Arbor Day Celebration. For more information call 961-1806 or email recycle@blacksburg.gov.

Montgomery County Broomin' and Bloomin'

It is time again for Montgomery County's annual beautification program, Broomin' & Bloomin'. The program will be held on April 20, 2002. Please call Linda Crable of the Montgomery County Improvement Council at 382-5793 for more information or to request registration materials.

Disposing of Bulky Items and Move-out Debris?

Do you have bulky items such as refrigerators, televisions, old furniture, and automobile tires that you need to dispose of outside of the Town's Spring or Fall Cleanup? If these items are in good condition consider donating them to a local charitable organization.



For bulky items that must be disposed of there are several options:

1. Town residents (with local vehicle decal) and Virginia Tech students (with proper ID) may use Montgomery County Consolidated Recycling and Waste Collection Sites for free disposal of bulky items
2. For a fee, items can be brought to the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority (381-2820)

Citizens can call 961-1142 to request a special pickup. The cost of a special pickup is \$20 per load plus any disposal fees. For more information call 961-1806 or email recycle@blacksburg.gov.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

Do you have pesticides, oil-based paints, and other household chemicals that you need to properly dispose of? The Town of Blacksburg will be holding its 7th Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on May 18, 2002. For the third year, this event will be county wide, with the collection day open to all citizens of Montgomery County. Pre-registration will be required. Look for additional information in a special mailing to Utility Customers and in newspaper advertisements. Please email recycle@blacksburg.gov or call 961-1806 with any questions.

Additionally, usable latex paint can be brought to the Latex Paint Exchange on June 1, 2002 at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. The Latex Paint Exchange is sponsored by the Montgomery County Improvement Council and offers residents a chance to bring in usable latex paint or to pick up any that they might need. Please call 382-5793 for further information.

From the end of 2001 and through the early months of 2002, Town Council considered residential and business development, neighborhood enhancement, public utility services, telecommunications franchise and facility provisions, local government operations and fiscal management, capital improvement planning, regional cooperation, 2002 legislative proposals, emergency services, special awards and community events.

- The Zoning Ordinance was amended to allow Automobile Repair Services by Special Use Permit in the Industrial Zoning District.
- The Circulation Plan for The Village At Tom's Creek was revised for the residential development.
- Echols Street was renamed Eckel Street to reflect the correct spelling of the family for which the street was originally named.
- A Special Use Permit was approved for Freddie Oliver's Auto Mart at 1510 South Main Street.
- A two family dwelling unit development was approved for the "Cedar Top" Subdivision.
- The 2000-2001 Annual Report of the Board of Zoning Appeals was received.
- 2001 Neighborhood Enhancement Matching Grant Projects were approved.
- An agreement was approved with the Montgomery County Public Service Authority and Board of
- Supervisors for Blacksburg's provision of back-up water service to the Price's Fork area.
- A contract was approved for engineering design services for a two million gallon water storage tank at the existing Highland Park site.
- Reappointments were approved for Town representation on the Blacksburg-VPI Sanitation Authority.
- The Blacksburg Telecommunications Advisory Committee's charge was amended.
- A telecommunications franchise was granted to Citizens Communications Corporation.
- Lease application fees were established for location of telecommunications facilities.
- A lease was approved for Virginia Tech's location of antenna space on the Alleghany Street water tank.
- Individual leases were approved with Ntelos and Devon Mobile Communications for location of antenna space on the North Main Street Water Tank.
- Interdepartmental transfers were approved for unexpended appropriations.
- The 2001 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the Town of Blacksburg was received and reviewed.
- Recreation Department program fees were amended.
- Applications for grant funding were approved for the following: Gateway Property connection to the
- National Forest; Downtown Blacksburg Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements; 2002-2003 capital, ridesharing and

administrative assistance for Blacksburg Transit.

- The 2002/2003 - 2006/2007 Capital Improvement Program was adopted.
- A Quarterly Work Session was held to consider proposed boundary line adjustments, WTOB fees, down-town trash collection, Environmental Management Plan, Performance Measurements with other local governments, technology update and a request for assistance from the Human Relations Council.
- Formal endorsement was given to the New River Valley Regional Competitiveness Program Re-qualification.
- The Town's legislative positions were established for the 2002 General Assembly session.
- Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad Officers were approved for 2002.
- Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department Officers and Assigned Positions were approved for 2002.
- The Blacksburg Police Department was formally congratulated on being awarded re-accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.
- The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department was formally congratulated on receiving the "Best Promotional Effort" award from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society for the 2001 First Night Celebration.
- 2002 dates were established for Free Parking in Downtown Blacksburg.
- Parade Permits were approved for the following: Blacksburg Classic Road Race; VT Rescue Squad 5k and 10k Race; "Take Back The Night" rally and march.
- Banner Displays over North Main Street were approved for the following: Virginia Tech SGA Big Event and CISO International Street Fair; CISO International Week; Habitat for Humanity Benefit.

Who's That New Retailer?

About Town supports the "Shop Blacksburg" theme and would like to introduce and welcome the following new business in Blacksburg. Please call on them – they will appreciate your patronage!

DAILY GRIND OF BLACKSBURG

460 Turner Street
Collegiate Square Shopping Center




About Town
300 South Main Street
Blacksburg, VA 24062-9003

Presort Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Blacksburg, VA
Permit #35

TO: Local Postal Customer

For These Event Dates and More, Check Out The Town's Online Calendar at www.blacksburg.gov

APRIL

- 
- 1 Town Council Budget Work Session – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
 - 2 Planning Commission Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
 - 3 Recreation Advisory Board – 5:00 pm – Parks and Recreation Offices – 615 Patrick Henry Drive
 - 4 Citizen Appreciation Dinner – 6:00 pm – Custom Catering Center, Patrick Henry Drive
 - 6 International Street Fair – Downtown Blacksburg and SGA Big Event – Virginia Tech campus
 - 7 Daylight Savings Time begins
 - 9 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
(Public hearing on Recommended FY2003 Operating Budget.)
 - 10 Board of Zoning Appeals – 4:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
(Meeting will be canceled if no cases scheduled.)
 - 16 Town Council Budget Work Session – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
 - 23 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
(Consideration of adoption of FY2003 Operating Budget.)
 - 27 New River Valley Symphony Spring Concert – 8:00 pm – Burruss Auditorium
 - 30 Town Council Quarterly Work Session – 3:00 pm – Location to be announced.

- 7 Planning Commission Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
- 8 Board of Zoning Appeals – 4:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
(Meeting will be canceled if no cases scheduled.)
- 9 Virginia Tech Senior Celebration – Downtown Blacksburg
- 11 Virginia Tech Spring Commencement Ceremonies.
- 14 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
- 20 Virginia Tech – 1st Summer Session Classes begin.
- 27 Town Offices Closed – Memorial Day
- 28 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.

JUNE

- 4 Planning Commission Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
- 5 Recreation Advisory Board – 5:00 pm – Parks and Recreation Offices – 615 Patrick Henry Drive
- 11 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
- 12 Board of Zoning Appeals – 4:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
(Meeting will be canceled if no cases scheduled.)
- 25 Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm – Municipal Bldg.
- 27 Virginia Tech – 1st Summer Session Classes end.

MAY

- 1 Virginia Tech Spring Semester ends.
- 1 Recreation Advisory Board – 5:00 pm – Parks and Recreation Offices – 615 Patrick Henry Drive
- 7 Town Council Elections – *Please Vote!*

Calendar of EVENTS